IN THE HIGH COURT OF GUJARAT AT AHMEDABAD

SPECIAL CIVIL APPLICATION No 9065 of 1999

For Approval and Signature:

Hon'ble MR.JUSTICE A.L.DAVE

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1. Whether Reporters of Local Papers may be allowed to see the judgements? : NO

2. To be referred to the Reporter or not? : NO

3. Whether Their Lordships wish to see the fair copy of the judgement? : NO

4. Whether this case involves a substantial question of law as to the interpretation of the Constitution of India, 1950 of any Order made thereunder? : NO

5. Whether it is to be circulated to the Civil Judge? : NO

MANU JERAM PANCHOLI

Versus

COMMISSIONER OF POLICE

Appearance:

MR ANIL S DAVE for Petitioner

MR KT DAVE, AGP, for Respondent No. 1, 2, 3

CORAM : MR.JUSTICE A.L.DAVE

Date of decision: 08/03/2000

ORAL JUDGEMENT

1. The petitioner has been detained under the provisions of the Gujarat Prevention of Anti-Social Activities Act, 1985 ("PASA Act" for short) by virtue of an order passed by Commissioner of Police, Surat City,

Surat, in exercise of powers under Section 3(1) of the Gujarat Prevention of Anti-Social Activities Act, 1985 ("PASA Act" for short), dated August 1 1999.

2. The grounds of detention indicate that the detaining authority took into consideration two offences registered against the petitioner as well as statements of two witnesses, in respect of incidents dated July 1, 1999 and July 10, 1999. Identity of the witnesses has not been disclosed by the detaining authority in exercise of powers under Section 9(2) of the PASA Act. The detaining authority also considered the possibility of resorting to less drastic remedies, but came to conclusion that, considering the illegal and anti-social activities of the petitioner as a 'dangerous person', it is necessary to immediately prevent him from pursuing his activities. The detaining authority came to conclusion that detention under PASA Act is the only efficacious remedy that can be resorted to, to immediately prevent the petitioner from pursuing his activities.

3. The petitioner has challenged this order of detention on various counts. However, learned advocate, Mr. Dave, has restricted his arguments to the fact that the subjective satisfaction recorded by the detaining authority for the need for exercise of powers under Section 9(2) of the PASA Act, cannot be considered as genuine. In order to substantiate his submission, Mr. Dave submitted that the statements were recorded on July 21, 1999, they were verified by the detaining authority on August 1, 1999 and the order of detention is passed on on the very same day. He submitted, therefore, that there was no time for the detaining authority to give consideration to the question of correctness and genuineness of the facts stated by the witnesses and the fear expressed by the witnesses, respectively, in their statements. The exercise of powers under Section 9(2) of the PASA Act is improper and has resulted into denial of right of making an effective representation as contemplated under Article 22(5) of the constitution. Mr.Dave, therefore, submitted that, in light of the decision of a Division Bench of this Court in the case of Kalidas Chandubhai Kahar v. State of Gujarat & Ors., 1993(2) GLR 1659, this petition may be allowed.

4. Mr. K.T. Dave, learned Assistant Government Pleader, has opposed this petition. He, however, does not dispute the factual aspect of the verification of the statements having been made on August 1, 1999 and the order having been passed on the very same day.

5. It is clear from the grounds of detention that the detaining authority has taken into consideration the statements of two anonymous witnesses. The authority came to a conclusion that the fear expressed by the these witnesses is correct and genuine and, therefore, the authority exercised powers under Section 9(2) of the PASA Act by not disclosing the identity of the witnesses. This Court is at loss to appreciate how the detaining authority could have arrived at this conclusion in such short spell. The detaining authority has not filed any affidavit in reply. It is, therefore, not possible to know as to what were the factors and material considered by the detaining authority besides the statements of the anonymous witnesses to come to conclusion that the fear expressed by the witnesses was genuine, that the incidents stated by the witnesses were correct and that there was need for exercise of powers under Section 9(2) of the PASA Act.

6. Similar such situation arose before a Division Bench of this Court in the case of Kalidas Chandubhai Kahar (supra), where the statements were verified on 16th October, 1992 and the order was passed on 17th October, 1992 and the Division Bench said that exercise of powers under Section 9(2) of the PASA Act was improper. This improper exercise of powers under Section 9(2) of the PASA Act was held to be detrimental to the right of the detenu of making an effective representation contemplated under Article 22(5) of the Constitution. The order of detention was, therefore, quashed. The facts of the present case squarely fall in line with the facts of that case. The order of detention, therefore, stands vitiated in the instant case as well and the petition deserves to be allowed on this count alone.

7. In view of the above discussion, the petition is allowed. The impugned order of detention dated August 1, 1999 passed against the detenu-Manubhai Jerambhai Pancholi is hereby quashed. The detenu is ordered to be set at liberty forthwith, if not required in any other matter. Rule is made absolute with no orders as to costs.

[A.L. DAVE, J]

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